

Jorn Ebner

Artist in Residence - final report

In Krems, I had a very **productive** time. Thanks to the invitation, I was able to investigate the sounds of bees for the first time. Jo Aichinger facilitated the contact with local beekeeper Dietlinde Kisling, who runs Honigwerkstatt, a shop and workshop in the city centre of Krems. She provided me with protective clothes and access to three beehives within walking distance of the Kunstmeile.

Before coming to Krems I prepared my project **bee city bees** as an online prototype: a visual container with two players for two sound pieces. The container showed a digitally modeled landscape image as background and gestural drawings as players. The two sound works were using bee hooting sounds that I found online and recordings of groups of humans that I recorded in Hamburg.

During the first week of my residency I continued work on the **coding** details for the website and played with more visual elements (namely parallax-effects for the background). As such effects pose compatibility problems for mobile devices (smartphones, tablet computers) I decided to use a static background with smaller visual effects. During the remaining residency seven more players with seven soundscapes were added, plus 27 players for short sound snippets. Towards the end of my stay, I fine-tuned the visual details.

From the beginning I was able to record the **interior** of the hives: At first I placed my binaural stereo microphones tentatively inside the top. Later Dietlinde Kisling helped me placing the microphone inside the central area. At the top, the bees work on their food, at the centre they care for their breed. The mics stayed over night. At a later stage, I recorded the areas outside the hives, this time in a different location, a village called Egelsee. In the exterior recordings from Krems-Stein there is also audible noise from the nearby city (football pitch, street noise, trains), whereas Egelsee was more quiet.

During the following **sound edit** I realised that the noise was apt for my project. I wanted to work with the corresponding sonic appearances of a peopled urban space and of the city of bees (Maurice Maeterlinck called hives a city – at least in the German translation I read).

The sound events inside the bee hives are monotonous on the one hand (a strong vibrating buzz) and shorter melodic moments. These happen, presumably, when the **vibrating bodies** of the bees come into contact; or when the bees were nibbling at the protective foam on the mics.



I understand my soundscapes as sound drawings: The sound layers are accentuated by melodic and rhythmic moments; the longer, more minimal works are condensed layers of material. In the same way that pencil lines create dense structures when the material accumulates.



From the recorded **sound events**, I developed two different types of soundscapes: shorter events were structured into short quasi melodies and rhythms, and the longer ones into minimalist and accumulative pieces.

Further research into the history of beekeeping and the myths attached (I read Vergil's *Georgica* some time ago)

provided me with a new title for the project. **Melissa** is Greek for honey bee. For me the soundscapes form an image of a city of bees, a kind of acoustic portrait. The source code of the html file includes written descriptions of Melissa city and its suburbs, plus an indication to where the original sound material came from.

The internet structure is a work of art in its own right, yet I don't regard to project completed. It is a starting point for further pieces. This summer, I am invited to develop a proposal for a **social sculpture** using the bee dances used for communication amongst the animals as a starting point (in relation to these new soundscapes).

For the work and experiences of the bee hive sound suggests further sound installations and performances. An immersive situation could include drone-like sonic environments (developed from the minimalist soundscapes). **After the residency** I will start work on drawings as a response to the soundscapes. It would be interesting for me to work with an ensemble for electro-acoustic performances where the recorded sound events are extended into instrumental structures. It would be great if the project could be extended in an installation and / or performance format at Klangraum or Galerie Stadtpark.

In parallel to my artistic project, I collaborated with **Veronika Grossberger** on two occasions, working with pupils from the Sonderschule. We visited a beekeeper and afterwards listened to bee sounds and danced the sound and wiggles dances of bees in the class room. That was fun.

Various performances during the **Imago Dei** festival were also inspiring for me. Especially the monotonous ritual songs performed by Ensemble Mazaher shaped some of my decisions with regard to my work. Later I was introduced to a member of the Ensemble NAMES (Alexander Bauer), which got me thinking about using the bee sounds in conjunction with musical instruments.

This was a short but productive and inspiring stay, which, I believe will provide further impulse for my **future** work.

Links

The projekt is online at:

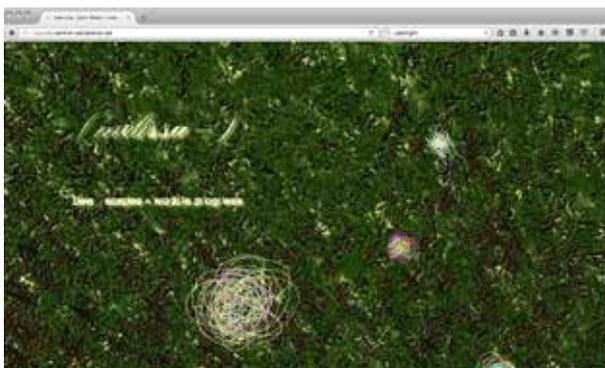
<http://sounds.central-peripheral.net/>

Social media contributions during my residency:

<https://www.instagram.com/extremnominal/>

<https://www.facebook.com/nominalextrem>

<https://www.facebook.com/jornebner>



Website



alternative Hintergrundversion (nicht online)